

A

FOUR MONTHS TOUR
THROUGH
FRANCE.

K

VOL. I.

D U B L I N :

Printed for Messrs. S. PRICE, W. WHITE-
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M,DCC,LXXVI.

БИБЛІОТЕКА

Е. С. І. А. Б. П.



DEDICATION vi

To WILLIAM SALKELD, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

THE following Letters having received your Approbation, the Diffidence with which I should have offered them to the Public, is considerably lessened. If I have erred in my Representations of Things, I shall not now be out of countenance, when you, under whose Eye they passed at the same Time, viewed them in the same Light.

I have but one Apology to make, for all the Mistakes with which I may be charged; and that is to be found in the Title-page.
As for the Liberty I have taken in

A 2 prefixing

iv DEDICATION.

prefixing your Name to these Letters (tho' they may arraign your Judgment) I shall make none : as a Testimony of Friendship I offer them, and as such I am sure they will be received, from

Your Sincere Friend and

Humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

A

FOUR MONTHS TOUR THROUGH FRANCE.

LETTER I.

Dover, April 22d, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I KNOW not what you are to expect from a man, who begins the performance of a promise with languor and reluctance; or what presage you may draw from thence, of his punctuality and spirit in the prosecution. I gave you my word at parting, to scribble some account of the places I should visit in my journey, as well as time and

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memory would permit—I acknowledge, and will endeavour to keep it: tho' considering the necessary short allotment of the one, and the treachery of the other, joined to the laziness that attends fatigue, you cannot expect to receive much paper, or information. I am, at present, very unwilling to take up a pen: but I should be too much ashamed of myself not to do it. Besides, those, who are bent on improvement, must not at all times consult their inclination: and I will not say I make, or shall make compliments of mine to you, as the expectation of reaping benefit from the recollection of occurrences, has a greater share in constraining it, than my vanity in thinking, or desire to give you pleasure. In such a trip as this, trifles are all I shall probably have to offer; and for more than trifles I have never bargained. Was the country, I am going to see, less visited, I should perhaps more boldly hazard remarks, and blunder out any nonsense

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nonsense that came into my head ; without that apprehension, which I shall have, of being a ridiculous repeater of what thousands have said before, and an enumerator of curiosities, of which every travelling barber may be able to give a better account. Where there are few, that are not capable of detecting one's blunders, (and with those few, I need not affirm, I do not rank you) to give any account of a country so well known as France, is like the task of writing a comedy, where there is *tanto—plus oneris quanto veniae minus—* But be that as it may—I am well assured you will be very ready to find excuses for any inaccuracies with which I may trouble you, and give me ample credit for any good thing on which I may happen to stumble.

So much for preamble.—The master of the packet, who has just been to pay us a visit, gives no very agreeable information. He says, that, if we have

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no mind to wait three days for a passage, we must be ready to go on board at one in the morning. You see we are not without an alternative, but such a one, as requires no great deliberation to reject. Three days at an inn in Dover, would be penance indeed—Our chaise, therefore, is now in the hands of some honest tars, who are going to stow it in the boat ; and we have agreed to await, over a bowl of punch, the time of hoisting sail, with all the patience and resignation of which we are masters.

I have many times heard grievous complaints of the extortion of the landlords on the Dover road, but I do not think we have had much reason yet to vent any ourselves. Their charge for horses is certainly somewhat extravagant : but the apology they make is plausible enough. Were all months in the year alike profitable to us, (say they) travellers would have no cause for this complaint : but this is not the case ; in the summer

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summer our houses are scarcely able to supply horses for the chaises that pass this road, and in the winter we have no chaises to employ our horses; so that as the expences of stabling in the idle part of the year, eat deep into the profits of the labouring season, we are obliged to raise the price of the stages, in order to make the balance on the whole year in our favour. How this may excuse them, I care not; but I hope that being tired, will excuse me, from saying any thing more, than that—

I am, &c,

LETTER

A 5

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or side visited him about two hours
after each arrival. — I have been
so long at sea, that I have not had time
to write.

LETTER II.

Calais, April 23d, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE now, for the first time set my foot on French ground. At half an hour after one this morning we were summoned to go on board; and at two, crowded with a number of other passengers into a boat, and pushed off towards the packet, where we were safely stowed, after paying the boatman one half of what he would willingly have extorted from us. The night was very sharp, but, being afraid of sickness, I staid on the deck, 'till I began to think the cold the most disagreeable evil of the two. I was not enough of a sailor to be able to walk without reeling, for as the wind blew fresh, when I attempted it, my motion was very occ-

on the,

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centric, and I was obliged to lay hold of the first thing that came in my way, for fear of tumbling overboard. On diving to the cabin, I found some women as well as men crawling into little cells, to avoid the dire disorder of whose approach they had but too shrewd intimations. I soon found, that if I continued to sit below, my stomach would sympathize with a gentleman's above, whose loud emotions gave a sad presage to others: therefore in compliance with the advice of the mate, I nestled in one of the little cells, and was so lucky as to fall soundly asleep, in spite of the hollowing, trampling, and ejaculations over my head.

As soon as we were hawled close to the quay of Calais, our deck was crowded with Frenchmen, who came from the *Aubergistes*, to invite strangers each to his respective inn. The language was immediately changed, and (if I can have any notion of what I never saw) the

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the vessel seemed to be like one boarded by Corsairs ; for some of those honest Monsieurs seized one thing, and some another, with which they marched off very composedly before the face of the owners. I knew not what to think, when I saw my little property taken on shore by a stranger, without my orders, and carried out of my sight. However we were soon satisfied by the person whom we had taken for our conductor, that it was usual to carry every thing to the *douane* or custom-house for examination, and that it would be restored, whenever we chose to apply for it.

We were immediately on landing led into a kind of guard-room or barrack, where our names were demanded ; and then proceeded to the custom-house, to recover our trunks, which were *plombéz* or sealed with lead—by our own choice, that we might obviate some part of the inconvenience of having our luggage tumbled over again and again, at the entrance

entrance of every town, by the hands
of other officers.

I am very glad that we have taken an English chaise with us; as I should not be very well pleased to be crammed into such an uncouth vehicle as I have seen here. The shafts alone are a load for a strong horse, weighing from one to four hundred weight. I had the curiosity to attempt to lift those of one, from which a gentleman had just alighted; and found that my whole strength, though I do not look upon myself as a weak man, was barely sufficient to raise them a little. They have also the additional weight of the traveller, sometimes of two; so that it is probable, if the trunks which are placed behind, are not very heavy, several hundred weight must rest on the back of one of the horses. I would fain, if I could, give you a sketch of this curious carriage. Imagine its form to be like that of an English one-horse chair, with sides of solid wood,

three

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three inches thick at least, reaching to the top, embossed with large brass nails, and ornamented with old Gothick carving. In the next place, add shafts and wheels more clumsy, and massive than those of common waggons with us, and a front with a grate of ropes, instead of glafs, together with a step to ascend, that by its size cannot weigh less than thirty pounds; and you may perhaps be able to form some idea of it. Had I met it on the road, I should immediately have concluded the postilion to be some itinerant showman, and the invisible traveller within, to be some wild beast, which he was driving to some neighbouring town for exhibition.

Adieu.—

LETTER

LETTER III.

Boulognt sur mer, April 24th, 1775.

DEAR —

THE first thing we found necessary to be done this morning before we left Calais, was, to get our chaise altered, as the shafts were not placed in a right position for three horses to draw abreast. The next, according to the opinion of our host, the celebrated Mr. *Dessein*,) was to provide a servant, who might ride post with us, and prevent any disagreeable embarrassment, to which we might be liable from our ignorance of the country. Advice given to persons ignorant of what was necessary, could not but be followed; and as *Delcour*, the young man who offered to attend us, had something in his manner and countenance that spoke strongly

ly

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ly for him at first sight ; we soon struck a bargain, and bade him get his boots and Bidet ready to set off for *Boulogne*.

This town has no great beauty to boast : it is like those English seaports where commerce has scattered opulence with a sparing hand. The inhabitants are principally composed of merchants, smugglers, and sailors ; with a person here and there who ranks himself among the *noblesse*. The churches are but meanly built, and ornamented with collections of paintings that are of a piece with the architecture. The several convents of Capuchins, Cordeliers, &c. are drear and gloomy habitations ; but the convents of females are said to be neater, and to have many English girls residing in them for education. What can induce parents to send their children to such a place as this for instruction, I cannot guess ; except they do it in compliance with the recommendation of the master of a brandy-sloop, or in order to avoid

avoid the trouble of attending to their improvement at home. Perhaps it may be sufficient for some, that their daughters bring home something French about them, whatever it is ; and the last polish of education is supposed to be given.

Boulogne has, perhaps, cast the most hostile eye towards England, of any town in France. Here, as you may have heard an hundred times, Cæsar and Claudius embarked to invade our rude undisciplined forefathers ; and here Charlemagne fitted out a fleet against the English and Danes, whom the French historians honour with the appellation of *peuples barbares*. At the same time, according to Heinault, he raised a Pharos, which I imagine must be that shown to travellers, as the building of Julius Cæsar. If the Boulognois were willing to dignify this structure with an antique title, they should have named it after Caligula ; though, even then, it might be disputed, as no vestiges

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ges of that which he built, remained at the time of *Charlemagne*. But it is possible, that the two Cæsars may be confounded; and they may think it sufficient, there is a probability, some of the stones from the ruins of the old Pharos might be taken to build that of Charlemagne. If this claim to antiquity was allowed, Roman Pharoſes, Amphitheatres, and Mausoleums might, with great ease, be propagated in the wilds of America; and as I suppose neither the quantity of antique matter requisite, nor its divisibility fixed, we might see statues of Phidias, Praxiteles, and Apollonius, from the London brass-foundries; rare medals fresh from Birmingham, and vessels of sounding names in antiquity, from every smith within the bills of mortality.

MONT RUE I L.

I had no time to close this letter at Boulogne tho' we left it so late this afternoon,

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ternoon, that Delcour expressed his fears that the gates of Montrueil would be shut; so I shall scribble on till supper, to fill up the sheet, and then wish you a good night. We were on the road when he told us this. My fellow traveller, Mr. —, asked him, if there was no *Auberge*, at which we could stop. *Non Monsieur*, says he. What must we do then if the gates should be shut, and we not able to gain admittance? *Ob Monsieur ça n'importe pas, un petit ecu*—I suppose he meant would open them: but he galloped off, and we saw him no more till we came to the town, where he had not been able to gain admittance with his powerful key, though he had waited an hour. Our names had been sent to the Governor, but his permission was not come. One, without considering the police of France, would imagine, there needed no such form to admit a chaise; unless they supposed, that like the Trojan horse, it might contain an army in its belly. At last, after waiting a short time,

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time, the crazy hinges gave a joyful signal, and our Bidets, who seemed more content than ourselves, with their situation, were allowed to convey us, where we have a prospect of a more comfortable lodging, than we expected two hours ago.

The peasants around seem to suffer great poverty. I know not how proper the land may be for cultivation, but less there cannot be—All seems a desert—No sooner does a chaise stop, than the cottages pour forth swarms to crave charity : young and old all join in the chorus, *Charité pour l'amour de Dieu*. Children are very early taught the art of getting money without labour ; and young girls of sixteen years and upwards, employ entreaties as well as smiles to draw a *sou* from your pocket.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Abbeville, April 25th, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I SAW scarce any thing in Montrueil to merit attention; and therefore shall not trouble you with a catalogue of its Churches, Parishes, or Convents. Though I received but little pleasure there, Abbeville, I think, has well repaid me for one day's ramble. The prospect of this town, at the distance of a quarter of a mile, is remarkably beautiful. As we entered, I fancied I saw a race of beings, far superior to what I had left some few hours ago—every thing seemed to be changed—no lazy beggars were loitering before the doors of their houses—every one appeared employed—and the Genius of Industry seemed to have blest the inhabitants

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bitants with neat dwellings, whole cloaths, and chearful countenances. That benefactor to mankind, appears here in the person of a Mr. *Vanrobais*; a gentleman who thinks a large fortune ought to be employed for other ends, than to support individual existence. An extensive manufacture depends upon him for motion. He is the source, from whence the plenty and opulence of this town are diffused. There is not a person, as I am informed, so feeble that he does not, in some measure, render a useful member of society. Pity it is, there are no more *Vanrobais* in the world; and fewer of those, who think themselves soiled by a contact with trade; the history of whose whole life, is generally no more than that they eat, drank, and slept; and who die, without having done any other service to mankind, by the means which were in their power, than to furnish moralists with an opportunity of inveighing against the effects of idleness, luxury, and pride.

I have

I have been rambling over the whole town ; and, having tired myself, am now going to tire you. The first visit we paid, was to the Manufactory of broadcloth, which belongs to the patriotic gentleman I have mentioned. Our conductor, in leading us from room to room, was very sedulous in explaining the use of every machine, and every employment, allotted to the different divisions : so that our information mounted, by a climax, from the wool, in the state which it is on the sheep's back, to the piece finished for the hands of the taylor. The cloths manufactured here, are esteemed the best of any France produces ; and the name *Vanrobais* is always considered as a mark of superior excellence.

I know not, whether it be owing to their industry, as it gives the freshness of health, or procures the means of neatness ; but the females here appear to be uncommonly beautiful. The women's

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men's work-rooms in the manufactory were filled with pretty faces; and almost every third or fourth door in the streets was graced with a smiling group, sweetening their labours with mirth and conversation.

The Organ, in the church of St. *Ulfran*, if I may judge by its appearance, is a noble instrument: at least, it answers very well the magnificence of the church. It is placed thirty feet high from the ground, which must certainly add considerably to the sweetness of its tone. I have often thought, that our Organs in England are placed too low, to have their proper effect; distance being, in a certain degree, necessary for music, as well as for painting. An Organ, as well as a Picture, may be approached too near: the masterly touches of the performer may be heard too distinctly; and a bold composition seem to the ear a jumble of discordant pointings, and broken parts, when it would have

have delighted, had it had been blended and meliorated by the interposition of space.

The Altar, on the left side as you enter the church, has near it a Crucifix of wood, which is broken in some parts, and seemed to have been wantonly chipped in others. This Crucifix, I was told, had been mutilated in that manner by a gentleman of considerable fortune in Abbeville; who was beheaded and burnt, for the contempt he had shewn the religion of his country. The story, as it was told me, is this. Mr. *De La Barre* (for that was his name) had supped one night with some friends, with whom he got intoxicated. He is said to have been a man, who professed himself openly an atheist; and gloried in being free from the prejudices of education. Here, perhaps, my informer gave him a character which he did not deserve: as he seemed to draw the conclusion of his being an atheist,

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from his scoffing at the ceremonial processions and observances so frequent here. 'Tis not, indeed, improbable, that his mind, like many of the first-rate wits in France, from being provoked at the insult put on human reason, by the superstitions of the Romish church, might conclude that all religion was mere mummerie, and fly to the other extreme of deism and impiety. But it is not for me to judge what he was. He had many enemies among the monks; and found, to his cost, that the first opportunity he gave them to punish him, was embraced with eagerness, and pursued with rigour. This night, in which his unfortunate phrenzy hurried him to commence an Iconoclastes, was reported to have been spent in his favourite conversation, the ridicule of image-worship, and ritual pageantry. Wine, and the collision of similar sentiments, set his passions on the blaze; till at last, not content with mockery, he fellied out with his friends,

sword

sword in hand, to rescue the nation from that superstition under which he thought it groaned. Reformations have sprung from almost as trifling a beginning as a drunken frolick : and Mr. De La Barre, had his attempt been successful, might have been reputed an inspired Saint, instead of a frantic Bacchanal. Had he met a procession of the *Bon Dieu*, as it is called, it might have been fatal to the lives of the followers : but luckily, at that time, there was no friar or monk in the streets. In passing the bridge, he saw this Crucifix, which has since been removed to the church. He made several attempts to demolish it with large stones ; but as they did not quickly answer his purpose, he began to hack it with his sword. His friends stood by inactive spectators, and had perhaps began to reflect on the consequences their temerity might incur. This gave a check to that of Mr. De La Barre ; but he had gone too far. Such an action could not fail of creat-

ing a great disturbance at Abbeville, and the unfortunate man was seized, imprisoned, and condemned. During his confinement he expressed no contrition, but often said, that he thought he had done a praise-worthy action: and when brought to the scaffold, betrayed in his countenance and behaviour, not the least fear at meeting the fate prepared for him. The *Bourreau* was the same person who had executed *Arthur de Lally*, Governor of Pondicherry, in the last war between England and France. Exhortations were not wanting, to induce M. De La Barre to avow repentance, and implore forgiveness; but he disdained, or would not hear them, and turning in a resolute manner to the Bourreau, said, *Est ce vous, qui avez exécuté Mr. De Lally?* Oui, replied the executioner. *Et bien donc* (said he) *vous l'avez vu trembler,* & *craindre la mort: et moi, je la brave,* & *la meprise—Depechez vous, & ne me manquez pas.* He then presented his head,

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head, which was severed from his body at a single blow.

Adieu.—

B 3 LETTER

LETTER V.

Amiens, April 27th, 1775.

AS yet I have been able to give but a poor account of the prospect of the country—naked and wild are the best epithets I have to bestow—tho' the nearer I draw to the capital, the more the hand of improvement is perceptible. The road to *Pecquigny* is not barren in objects to please the eye. Hitherto, I think, trees have been as scarce, as they are in the Highlands of Scotland: but this day we have seen some very respectable ones, and little woods; nay, even houses, that seemed to belong to persons of fortune.

The

The fields near the town were filled with a considerable number of people, employed in cutting and preparing Peat ; the earth in the neighbourhood being of the combustible nature of coal : and as if some of the spirit of industry had emanated from Abbeville, the streets, though it was not seven o'clock in the morning when we passed, were lined with people, who were beating and spinning hemp at their doors. There we changed postilions ; which occasioned afterwards a trifling perplexity that we did not foresee. Our servant had spurred on his bidet, to get breakfast ready at Amiens against our arrival ; but neither informed us, nor did we enquire, at what house. The postilion we concluded knew—but we were all blunderers—for he drove directly through the town, and stopped at the post-house, where no tidings could be had of Delcour. What was worse, nothing could be got for breakfast ; the horses were put into the stable, and our

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driver was very unwilling to return. However, at last, some messengers, whom we had dispatched to the different Inns returned with news, that coffee was prepared for us at the *Grand Turk*. On enquiry we had greater reason to attribute our embarrassment to the policy than the mistake of our postilion, for Delcour had absolutely appointed the place; but the knave was supposed, with some others of his brethren, to have conspired against our *Aubergiste*, because he did not fee them for bringing Englishmen to his inn.

I need not tell you that *Amiens* is the capital of Picardie. It appears to me to resemble *Salisbury*, though I know not in what, except in the rivulets that run in various streets of the town. The *Somme* is its principal river, which divides itself at the entrance into three branches, subdivided again into lesser ones; that like a benevolent River it may distribute its conveniences, as wide

wide as possible in the place where they are most wanted. At the extremity it collects itself, to furnish a sufficient depth of water, for the boats that pass to and from Abbeville and the sea.

The manufactures here are various; but chiefly of velvet, from which the town is said to derive its flourishing condition. Amiens has been called the Granary of France; tho' I saw nothing in its environs, that can be put in competition with the fertility and appearance of cultivation in most of the counties of England. The want of trees and hedges presents a picture that is certainly not so luxuriant, and pleasing to the eye, as one where they are every here and there interspersed; but the fields themselves have not that verdure and rich cloathing, which would give them the title of fertile with us.

I know not which are more numerous here, the streets or the convents;

B 5 the

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the latter seem to be sowed very thick, and are for the most part elegant buildings, neatly ornamented, with clean Cells, and handsome Chapels. As we passed one of the female encampments, we were in hopes of being amused with a song, which a girl was accompanying with a lute: but we had not listened long, before it was ended. Our approach might probably give the imprisoned Songstress offence; as the window was open, and the bars could not hide her from profane eyes. What little we heard, made us wish for more, but she was not to be entreated; so we were obliged to be content, and proceed to the Cathedral of *Notre Dame*.

The elegance and beauty of this church is almost beyond description. I shall not pretend to give you any account of its ornaments, nor the order of its structure: it is enough to say, that I think not one in England can equal it. I may be thought a strange mortal for

for hazarding such an opinion. But I would not be mistaken. If nothing more is necessary to the completion of a building, than walls, pillars, domes, and roofs; I then suppose we have one superior to this of which I am speaking. Exterior grandeur and magnificence I do not pretend to dispute; but certainly the interior of our structures is by no means answerable. When I see an edifice like Blenheim, I expect to find the apartments within, correspond to the idea of magnificence it had raised in my mind from without: and I cannot find a reason, why I ought to be more disappointed in a church than a palace. No person can say that the inside of St. Paul's, in London, is equal to its outside, the whole being mean, dirty, and unworthy of the building: an immense vault, drear and wide, where the eye wanders for something to repose on, and finds nothing but gloomy walls, uncouth wood-work, a paltry organ, and a dingy choir. I am not for decorating a temple

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a temple with coffins, relicks, or images of saints ; but I would have the whole suitable in all its parts. It might be a just character of the English to say, that they were able to form great designs, which they were unable to execute ; that they raised the shells of superb structures, but finding the rest beyond their abilities, were content to patch them up, with the first vile materials that could be procured. But I had almost forgotten, to mention a relick, of which this city so highly boasts : I mean the head of St. John the Baptist. We were led into a little chancel, on one side of the Cathedral, where some monks produced, with great solemnity, a gold basin, in the middle of which, covered with glass, something like the head of an Egyptian mummy was enclosed, garnished with a number of stones of value, which are clumsily set in, and strung about the edge. This head, on certain days, is laid on a table without the door, for people to reverence and kiss.

One

One of the monks very politely gave us the form of prayer, usually addressed : but we made no other use of it, than to put it in our pockets. This scull has been a great traveller ; and has had knees bent to it in various countries. The history given of it, is ; that the disciples of St. John, after his death, preserved the decollated head of their master, for a long time in Jerusalem ; and that in the time of Vespasian, and the wars of the Jews, it was miraculously transported to Cosilaon, a village in Silesia ; whence one Wallon de Sarton, afterwards made a Canon, purchased or stole it (we are not told for certain which) to enrich the cathedral of Amiens. To doubt whether this relick was ever born on St. John's shoulders, would be reckoned by the Amienites an unpardonable impiety ; though, perhaps, the impossibility of Curiosity's being ever able to come at the truth, is the only thing that saves them the mortification of being told by some busy Antiquary, that what

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what they keep with such solemnity, and have worshipped for so many years, is the head of some malefactor. They have pronounced an anathema against the head of the same Saint, preserved, as it is said, at Rome: and I know not whether it should raise indignation or laughter, to hear a list of miracles, prostituted proofs of this divinity of their own.

The people of this place seem to have a strange esteem for decollation: and an uncommon veneration for heads without bodies, and bodies without heads. It has reached to the names of their very streets, one of which caught my eye as I passed it, being inscribed in capital letters—*Rue des corps nuds sans tetes*; the street of naked bodies without heads. Whatever the ancient inhabitants might have been, the present are decently cloathed, and carry heads on their shoulders; but I could learn no reason of them for the odd appellation that was given

given to the place of their residence. Perhaps there is none; if there is, you must be content to be ignorant of it, as I am.

Farewell.—

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Clermont, April 28th, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I SIT down at night, to give my friends an account of my rambles by day; to serve up a farrago of things, which I cannot digest myself, and cook a supper, too crude to please an appetite, less delicate than yours. But what can be done with unpalatable materials? Indeed, I have now and then, an opportunity of dishing up a church, or a convent; but the same fare, every day, will not be swallowed long, by any appetite less undistinguishing than the *Dragon of Wantley's*. You need not tell me, that the fault lies in my own unskilfulness: I am but too conscious of it: and acknowledge my inability, to make a savoury Ragout of a Bidet's bridle,

bridle, or a Fricasee of a Jack-boot. Here, I am not afraid to be questioned by you, who have set me the task, why a man should take a business in hand, when he confesses himself ignorant of its practice, and write when he has nothing to say? This question from another, might embarrass not a little; and I should have no other than the laconic answer an honest postillion gave my friend, who asked the reason, why he had put an unbroken young horse to our chaise, that by his untoward motions had near overturned us into a ditch: *Ob Monsieur* (says he) *il faut apprendre.*

Shall I take you mile by mile, where I have passed to day; and describe every little village and every post? Indeed I have no inclination; and if I had, I should guess what would be the consequence, and shrewdly suspect the fate of this poor paper. I am now for a trip, (whose expedition shall make up
the

the deficiency of agreeable objects) back to Calais again, for my own satisfaction; to review the Inns, Horses, Postillions, Filles de chambre, and Aubergistes, that I may not forget them. I tell you what I am going to do, that you may choose before, to go with me or not: if you please you may stop here, to-morrow you will probably find me at Chantilly.

Let me see—Of the Inns I have not much to praise or complain—dirty to be sure they are—but many in England are so too—I have not found, neither did I expect the superb apartments and elegant refreshments of the Bath road—No disappointment therefore—What gave my eyes the most offence was the smoke of their wood-fires, for which there is in general no more vent by their chimnies, than in the huts of a Hottentot kraal. This also was not without a remedy, as the weather did not often require a fire: though he who
in

in winter thinks the cold the most disagreeable of the two, must be content to sit, oftentimes, enveloped in a dingy cloud, whose pungent particles were too irritating for me to bear. To do justice to their beds, which are generally two in a room, they are really luxury for a weary traveller : and the matrasses are piled so high on one another, that one would, at first sight, think a stool or little ladder necessary to mount them. Almost every room is floored with tiles instead of boards, and that into which you are first introduced, is generally your breakfast, dinner, supper, and bedroom. I think, on this road, where so many Englishmen travel, the inn-keepers might supply knives as well as forks at their tables ; unless they think that, as the servants have commonly a small hanger at their belt, all other carving-instruments are superfluous. Had we not taken care to provide ourselves with large *Couteaus*, we must have been content to have turned Delcour's weapon to

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to the dishonourable office of a chopping-knife, or have torn the meat to pieces with our fingers.

The rate of travelling is nearly the same as in England ; that is, between six and seven miles an hour : tho' we sometimes wondered, how those wretched carcases which they tied to the chaise, could perform their post with such expedition. The exertion indeed is commonly but for six miles, or one post ; which I never wished double, as well for my own sake as theirs. No beast can be more patient of the lash, or tread with more philosophic gait, than a French *Bidet*. Whether it was owing to my want of skill, or those enormous spurs that are fixed in the boots, I know not : but as I mounted one this morning, for the sake of variety, I soon found, that flog as much as I could, I must be left behind, and therefore was obliged to yield up the sedate animal to Delcour, and the terrors of the jack-boot. It is said

said that as these beasts are mostly *chevaux entiers*, they are capable of bearing a great deal of labour. Of their ability in this respect, the postilions must be allowed to be the best judges; but I am so well convinced of their disposition in another, that I should not easily be persuaded to trust myself within the reach of their heels, which they lift very readily upon almost every occasion. These Chevaux entiers, tho' seldom more than the shadows of horses, will, if left alone, rear themselves up, and fight with great fierceness; of which we had an instance when the driver dismounted, that made us apprehensive of danger, both to ourselves and the chaise, as they seemed to be tumbling back upon us. If he had not returned on hearing the noise, we must have leapt out: but a few smart strokes of the whip soon settles a truce between them, and appeases the tumult in a moment.

*Hi motus animorum atque hæc certamina tanta
Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescent.*

The

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The horse of the best appearance of the three is generally placed in the shafts; but always requires more of the lash, to make him mend his pace, than the little scurvy Bidets that amble his his side. This appeared somewhat strange, and I know not how to account for it; unless that being accustomed to the enormous load of some of the French carriages, which they only support whilst the others draw, when placed in the shafts of an English chaise, which weighs little or nothing, they still draw no more; and are like those Beasts, who having been taught by pain, to dance to a particular tune, whenever it's tones strike their ears, connect it mechanically with the sensation with which it was first accompanied, and make the same motions though the pain or primum mobile be omitted.

Instead of the contributions laid on travellers by turnpikes in England, the French have a polite way of making them

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them pay, for being permitted to pass without molestation. At the entrance of most of the towns a gentleman very civilly informs you, that he is empowered to detain your chaise, till he has searched your sack *de nuit*, and luggage, to see whether any contraband or prohibited goods are concealed there; but the arrest of execution, he expects you to draw from your pocket. The sight of a *vingt quatre*, or *douze sous* piece makes him shut the door, and bid the postilion proceed. A toll they can have no pretence to exact, considering their roads; and yet, perhaps, three parts of England might come under the same predicament. Indeed, I know not whether I would not pay for the forbearance of putting me to an inconvenience, with greater cheerfulness in France, than for the oftentimes falsely-supposed convenience of our turnpikes. In the one case if the circumstance of having my cloaths tumbled over at every town, is not disagreeable to me, I may keep my

money

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money in my pocket but, in the other I am obliged to pay for riding on roads I can scarcely help execrating at every step.

A chaise no sooner stops in England, but the landlord, landlady, and waiters all crowd round to wait your commands ; but here, it is not often that any make their appearance. Sometimes, indeed, the *Fille de chambre* comes, staring out of curiosity ; but never thinks of showing a room, unless she is ordered, or of enquiring whether you want any refreshment after your journey. However, upon the whole, the civility, tho' not so great as I had been taught to expect from French politeness, is full sufficient, and the entertainment handsome enough to please any one who is not too difficult to be a traveller.

Adieu. —

LETTER

LETTER VII.

St. Denis, April 29th, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I DARE say you expect me to begin in notes of admiration, and to tell you, that I am enraptured with the magnificence, beauty, elegance, &c. of Chantilly. I measure your ideas, by those which I had formed myself, of the famed palace of the Prince of Conde. But if you never have concluded me to be in the field of plenty, and I judge wrong of your expectations, the disappointment of mine will not influence your reception of this letter, where I fear you will find me less able to afford you entertainment than usual.

In my last I told you, that I should be found the next night at Chantilly.

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Three

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Three days were supposed to be scarce sufficient, to take a cursory view of the apartments, pictures, statues, gardens, and curiosities, which our imaginations had painted in profusion, around the residence of this Prince : but, alas ! after six hours sauntering I have little more to tell you, than that I am rather tired than delighted. St. Denis has therefore the honour of furnishing us with accommodations for this night.

The encreasing beauty of the prospect along the road as you approach Chantilly, is sufficient to feed the imagination of a man with a picture of some earthly Paradise, which would presently open to his view. Perhaps the dullest fancy is capable of colouring too high, for nature or art to equal : and another, by expecting nothing, might find what I could not. However it may be, I scarce saw any thing, of which I could give you a particular description, unless I had an inclination to be exceedingly

ceedingly tedious. To tell you that one apartment was furnished with chairs of this or that silk, that another was hung with tapestry, that on the right or left of the garden there was a lion or crocodile that vomited water; may be subjects, on which I may take up a great portion of your time, as well as my own, with abundant waste of paper, and increase of postage.

The house at a distance has a magnificent appearance; but I should no more think of comparing it with the noble structure of Blenheim, than the Palace of St. James with Chantilly. A person who enters the apartments, with a voracious appetite for pictures and statues, will be obliged to be content with very scanty fare; there being but few either of the one or the other that seemed to me worthy of notice. As I imagined there must be other rooms, better ornamented by the hands of great masters, which were not shown, I enquired for them;

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and was answered that I had seen all, and that the Princes of that house took a greater delight in having good horses and dogs, than the works of sculpture, or galleries of paintings. This I had no reason to disbelieve, when I saw the stable, which is a palace itself, filled with English horses, which are the most esteemed here, and pampered with the best corn and hay that France can produce. The kennels are likewise handsome habitations for the canine race, and have hounds of every kind that is ever used in any chace.

But I must not forget to mention the Cabinet, which has lately been fitted up in the palace, for the reception of a choice collection of fossils, presented to the Prince by the King of Sweden. Almost every beauty of the mineral kingdom is here displayed in great abundance, with all its exquisite diversity of colours, spars, and precious stones, studded by chance in lumps of rich ore, so

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as to have as fine an effect, as the hand of art is capable of giving. There are also other natural productions of various kinds : but such as would not be thought worthy for their scarcity to enter into the Museum of a Sir Hans Sloane. However, small as this collection is, you receive one pleasure from it, which the great apartments of Bloomsbury do not give : I mean the opportunity of reading yourself an explanation of every thing you see, without troubling the person who shews it ; who, if he is inclined, and able to give you proper information, can never answer the numberless questions, that the many who are introduced must find necessary. Those who visit such repositories, are not in general people who are capable of classing common things under their proper heads, and much less the extraordinary. It may be said, that there is a person appointed, whose business it is to inform those who are ignorant, and answer their questions : I allow it—but then I can-

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not monopolize this person, nor lead him by the ear through the rooms, till he has given me the history of every thing in which I would be instructed. I suppose there is no one, who has ever visited the London Museum, but will confess how highly disagreeable the necessity of incessant questions is; and few modest men, who have not been content to remain in ignorance of many things, rather than purchase information at such a price. Were slips of paper fixed on, or over every curiosity, describing what it is, as in the Prince of Conde's cabinet, I should pass thro' the apartments with much greater pleasure; and I am satisfied, that by this means, I should gain more knowledge in the few hours that are allotted, than in visiting it every day for a twelvemonth, with those who are appointed to show it in the state it is at present.

The principal beauty of the gardens consists in the *jets* and *bruits d'eau*, which
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are very fine, and spout their streams to a considerable height. I was much pleased with the walks in their groves; though, here, I think he who has the pleasure of rambling in the woods of Lord Bathurst, near Cirencester, will not envy those who saunter in the *bosquets* of the Prince of Condé. You will perhaps conclude, that I have seen all these things in an ill-humour: I am not conscious that I have had any cause for being so, except the disappointment of not finding what I expected. For the future, if possible, I will expect nothing.

I am, &c.

LETTER VIII.

Paris, May 20th, 1775.

DEAR SIR,

I ALLOW you have reason to be displeased at my silence, as you expected, in the midst. of curiosities, that I should be better furnished with materials for scribbling, than at any other place. But the quantity of these is the very cause of what you complain: for, with such a profusion around me, I am really more at a loss than if I was in a desert. I assure you, I intended to skip over Paris entirely, without saying any thing about it: for to give you a description of buildings and curiosities, the simple enumeration of which would fill a volume, was a task to which I was very unequal, and besides had not the least inclination to encounter. Matters of

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of greater moment, such as the police, manners, &c. I had not the presumption to think I could take in at a *coup d'œil*—and therefore nothing remained for me but to be silent. However, I will obey your commands as they flatter my vanity : and if you can be content to take a cursory ramble through this metropolis, shall be at your service, till we turn our faces towards the south.

Your friend—and I have been searching in vain, to find in what the boasted superiority of Paris over London consists : and, tho' there is scarce a street, public garden, or walk that we have not traversed, nor an edifice that we have not seen, we are at a greater loss to account for that reputation which it bears for beauty, or for the boldness, with which all the French assert it to be the noblest and most beautiful city in the world. I am an Englishman, and whether it be prejudice or not, may be allowed to say that London is more beau-

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tiful than Paris. The beauty of a city must lie either in its streets, public edifices, houses, bridges, rivers, gardens, or situation : though in no one of these can I discover a superiority, that is not more than overbalanced by an inferiority in another. Paris is commonly divided into University, City, and Town ; but the University is the only part where the streets deserve any other appellation than that of lanes. The want of a footpath makes walking not only disagreeable, but dangerous ; the one from the dirt, which is in vast abundance, and the other from the coaches, and unwieldy Fiacres. Indeed a pavement of broad stone, such as we see in London on each side, would here take up the whole street. Shops there are none that have an opulent or handsome appearance ; and the fronts of the houses, I mean such as are extended on a line with the rest of the street, have not the least pretensions to magnificence or elegance. I have often been bid to remark,

mark, that though the streets were narrower, the buildings were more lofty than ours in London. This I do not dispute; but for my life I cannot see what advantage is gained, saving that they are darker, defend the passenger from the sun, and contain a greater number of inhabitants. One house, indeed, is seldom confined to a single family; people of different occupations living on the different stories: so that you may find a cutler's shop on the ground-floor, a barber's on the second, a musician on the third, a petit maitre on the fourth, a taylor on the fifth, and a poet on the sixth or seventh. But the hotels or houses of the noblesse, are the chief boast of a Parisian. These are generally small quadrangles, habitable on two or three of the sides, with commonly a dead wall towards the street. All, you may suppose, are not of the same form: but I will leave you to judge, whether the houses of our noblesse, which are full as elegantly built,

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when extended on a line with the street, do not contribute more to the ornament of a city, than a number of these quadrangles dispersed here and there, which you must enter to see, and where beauty is broken into parts, so as to require a strong imagination, to unite and form a whole. These houses admit no fiacres within their gates; a Swiss in his *broderie* stands at the entrance, and excludes all that do not come in their own carriages, or cannot afford to be trundled in a remise.

The Seine disappointed me exceedingly: I had figured to myself a river much larger than the Thames, with innumerable boats, barges, and bridges of a magnificent structure. You will perhaps ask me what right I had to draw this picture of it: I can only say from those that had been drawn by others. That it is larger than the Thames, at an equal distance from the sea, is certain: but the Thames at London, I am sure,

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sure, would swallow up three such rivers as the Seine is at Paris. The banks are generally lined with washer-women, whose method of cleaning linen is, to beat it with a wooden mallet on a large smooth stone. Barges and boats there are but few, Paris lying at such a distance from any port; and vessels there are none, the water not being deep enough to float them. Of the bridges there is not one yet that deserves to be mentioned, excepting the *Pont Neuf*: but though I pass it almost every day, I know not yet where its beauty lies. Of the number, elevation, or breadth of its arches it has nothing to boast, nor of its ornaments, or excellency of its stone, and materials. I may be singular, but it appears to me, to be the most uncouth clumsy structure, I ever beheld. But I am doing wrong, in insulting a fallen favourite; for an upstartbridge, in the road to St. Germain, seems now to run away with all the reputation,

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putation, and to be at present the vaunted *Pont Neuf* of the French.

In some of its public buildings and walks, I must allow that Paris has the advantage over London. The *Louvre* never fails of being compared with triumph to the palace of St. James's, and the *Thuilleries* to the Park: they have not, however, any church they can venture to put in competition with that noble pile of architecture, St. Paul's. All the gardens are kept in the exactest order, and are oftentimes filled with company till midnight; for there is not the least occasion to fear pickpockets or riots. Indeed he must be a bold person who will steal, or commit any outrage, when almost immediate execution, on the gallows or the wheel, is the consequence, without a prospect of escape, or of pardon. A brusque insolent character is a thing not known here; and a blow received, can only be expiated by the death of the offender. This influences much

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the behaviour of the common people, who are very far from offering such insults, as every one who walks the streets of London, must daily suffer. For they are certain if they offend to have a cane laid across their shoulders, which if they should retaliate with a blow, is instant death, as every gentleman wears a sword, and thinks himself dishonoured if he takes any less revenge for a *soufflet*, though it should only derange the economy of his curls. If it is the offender that falls, the person who killed him is seldom punished; but the affair is rather winked at, than tolerated. Of this I will tell you an instance, in what happened last week on the Boulevards, a place to which company resort in coaches, about the close of the day. I was not a spectator, and therefore can only give you what I heard. On each side of the road, which is between two rows of trees, there is a walk, for those who choose to quit their carriages, and sometimes the middle of the road itself is made an occasional one

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by those gentlemen who choose it for the greater conveniency of seeing the company, and talking to their acquaintance as they pass. Here it was, that a fatal fray happened between a musquetair and a coachman. The coachman bade the musquetair, who was before him, to get out of his way, and on his not complying immediately, whipt his horses so as to endanger him with his pole. The officer resenting this, laid his cane over the fellow's shoulders, which compliment was returned with a stroke of the whip. This insensed the musquetair, who instantly drew his swod, and thrusting at the coachman, plunged it into his thigh, as he sat on the box. The poor wretch, who now perceived he had been guilty of an offence which the rigorous laws of honour punished with death, leapt down, and attempted to save his life by flight; but his enemy was not content till he had overtaken, and run him through the body. He dropt, and was taken to a house, where he

he died in a short time. The musquetair retired for a day, and afterwards walked about Paris as if nothing had happened. Those who crowded on the spot, to enquire what was the matter, when they heard he had received a soufflet, said, *Il a raison, C'est bien fait*—The French entertain notions of personal honour, nearly approaching to enthusiasm, and are most feelingly alive to every circumstance that but seems to offer any hurt to it. This may, perhaps, be the reason why a nation in some cases so eminently possessed of humanity, should pass by, even with marks of approbation, an action, which when coolly considered, must appear of so horrid a nature.

A blow is never forgiven, when received by a gentleman; and one, two, or three duels are not sufficient, if death be not the consequence on one side or the other. A desperate wound, on such an occasion, is esteemed no reparation; but

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but the insulted generally pursues his challenges, till he has given, or received one that is mortal. Even bishops here are not exempted, but challenge, and are liable to be challenged ; and the abuse of the power in a governor, is in some measure checked, by his not being able to refuse fighting any gentleman, who thinks himself aggrieved by it, without being dishonoured in the opinion of every Frenchman. Here, I dare say that you will think with me, they push honour too far ; and that the points of barbarism and refinement meet : tho', at the same time, I think there is a politeness, in which we might laudably imitate the French, without being *petit maitres*, or running into such extremes, in correcting its abuses, as I have lately mentioned.

Some method, I should think, might be invented, for restraining the licentiousness of the populace in London, which is grown to such a pitch, as can-
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not be paralleled in the most savage country of the globe. The brutality one meets in walking the streets, calls aloud for restraint. If a man is not very nimble, he has his neck broken by a hackney-coachman, or at least his shins by some lamplighter, who is permitted to run with his ladder, though in the midst of a crowd. If he happens to be hard of hearing, he is knocked off the causeway by some chairman's pole, or has his skull fractured by a porter with a load of iron: not to mention pick-pockets, chimneysweepers, butchers, coalmen, &c. by whom he will be insulted through mere wantonness. I have seen a fellow at mid-day, in the Strand, insulting every lady that passed, in so gross a manner, that, had I been honoured with having any of them under my protection, I fear I should have been so much of a Frenchman, as to have taken a revenge I might, perhaps afterwards have thought too severe. But such is the offspring of glorious liberty, and these

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these *wild dogs* must not be muzzled, lest in curbing licence, we should touch their sacred birth-right, English freedom. I have been often asked, whether any one ever wears a sword in London; for the French seem to conclude, from the opinion every one has of our barbarism, that they should find it necessary to kill a man, every time they walked the streets. In short, the frightful stories every traveller tells of our common people in London, has confirmed an universal opinion of their being below savages, and I doubt whether it is not just.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Paris, May 24th, 1775.

OF the publick spectacles the *Comedie Françoise* is the chief; and has taken up our time more than any other; there being scarce an evening that we do not spend there. This theatre is spacious, and, when filled with company, has a splendid appearance. It is divided into the Stage, Orchestra, Parquet, Parterre, Amphitheatre, and Boxes. The stage and orchestra differ very little from those of Drury-lane or Covent-Garden; except that in the one there is but little shifting of the scenes, and in the other a better band with shorter intermedia or interludes. The parquet, which is a division of about six or seven rows of clothed seats, behind the

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the orchestra, is of the same price with the boxes, and filled promiscuously with men and women. The parterre, which answers to our pit, is without seats, and is filled with men who stand during the representation: and the amphitheatre is behind all, a little raised above the parterre, and containing the same, or it may be a greater number of benches than the parquet. The remainder of the house consists entirely of boxes, the first and second row of which are generally hired by particular people for a year, or longer, as they please.

The council or committee that manage the house, conduct every thing with the greatest propriety and regularity. I cannot but think it a reflection on our stage (in the productions for which we consider ourselves as rivals to the French) that it is not on a similar plan to that at Paris, or at least on a more liberal one than at present. That a theatre with royal licence, set apart
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for the rational entertainment, and instruction of a nation, should be given up to the management of any one, two, or three men, whose purses are weighty enough to purchase it ; by which means a blockhead may fit the arbiter of public taste ; may gratify a private resentment, in depressing an actor, or his avarice, in frightening every author from any attempt, of adding to those productions in which we pride ourselves ; may become the midwife of public genius, however unskilful, and have the power of stifling every bantling, whose features happen not to suit his humour ; nay, even of condemning unseen, without examining whether they are worthy compassion or not, all those poor wretches whose parents have no interest to boast ; is a thing, I cannot reconcile with the wisdom of a polished people. It may be said, that it is the interest of a manager not to lose the good opinion of the public : I allow it—it is also every one's interest to be good and virtuous ; but

but yet we find multitudes stand in need of laws and restrictions, to prevent them from acting in opposition to it. But I would observe, that, tho' it may be the interest of a nation, yet it is not the interest of a manager, to foster new pieces : for since they find that pantomimes and pageantry, which, to our great disgrace, have lately usurped the place of moral pieces, bring as full a house as the best tragedies or comedies : they can little be prevailed on, to give an author the profit of three nights, which they may put in their own pockets. But setting interest aside : I should be glad to know, what man's taste can be made an unfailling standard for that of all : or whether it is not possible, his, may condemn a piece, the public's may approve. We know that there have been instances, of a theatre's applauding to the skies, a production that it had formerly condemned, and bestowing liberally on an author of reputation, praises for a play which it had hissed, when he was unknown.

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There are but too many instances of this: and how probable is it, then, that one, two, or three men may often judge wrong: as a just taste in poetry is not so very common a thing as to fall even to the lot of one in three: at least the chances are in any shape in favour of number, and forty heads will certainly commit fewer blunders, in determinations of this kind, than one. Why a theatre should be farmed at all, I cannot find a reason; if it be called royal, let it be conducted in a royal manner: not for the interest of an individual, like a country puppet-shew, but for the instructive entertainment of a nation. I would have managers, but they should be many, and not perpetual; and tho' they might not be content with the honour, no interest should they have in the profits of the house. I wonder not at the meanness of our productions, which are daily dwindling to pantomime, and the entertainment of Sadlers Wells; nor that no one ventures above a trans-

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fation, who cannot flatter, and cringe to a manager, or boast some powerful interest, to procure his play a reading. A play that is not culled from the French is almost become a prodigy, and a man need not live long, to find our theatre the contempt of every other in Europe. But I am rambling out of my way.

The actors here, in my opinion, are far superior to the generality of those we have in England : a constrained and studied gesture is not so much to be observed amongst them ; for every motion of the body and arms, seems to accompany the passions they express, with the greatest propriety and ease. Our actors are commonly awkward, because they appear to study action, and to be thinking more in what attitude they shall throw themselves, to catch a plaudit from the upper gallery, than on the subject that ought to give rise to it. The French do not seem to think that they are using gesture, and consequently it

it does not appear unnatural. Perhaps their superiority arises, from the custom they have, of accompanying every thing they speak with some motion or other of the body, and that they commence acting from the time they begin to articulate. I could wish to add to our stage a *Le Kain*, a *La Rive*, a *Molé* and a *Vestris*; but were the language the same in France and England, I do not imagine they would willingly change from a polite to a barbarous audience; where the pensions, that should support them when they are infirm, and no longer able to please the public, are engrossed by a private purse. During the representations here, the attention of the house is remarkable; there is no whistling between the fingers, no bawling for *roast beef*, nor pelting the parterre with oranges, but the public behaviour is such, as becomes those who lay claim to the title of a polished people. Upon the whole, our theatre, when compared to that of Paris, is little better than a

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bear-garden ; and I have no expectation (whatever account our own vanity may make of it) that it will ever bear any reputation among foreigners, before its regulation be totally altered, and no such glaring vestiges of barbarism remain.

Of the *Comedie Italienne* I have little more to say, than that the house is built on the same plan as the *Comedie Françoise*, and that it sometimes consists of a farrago of French and Italian, and of comedy, farce, and pantomime. Harlequin is introduced in most of the burlesque dramas, but instead of being a successful hero as he is with us, is buffeted, kicked and made the sport of all the characters in them. I have seen the plot and incident of comedy disgraced with the vilest buffoonry ; and think it an affront to Italy, which has given birth if not to many great dramatic writers, besides *Metastasio*, at least to great poets and historians, that this house should

should be called the Comedie Italienne. But I am talking nonsense; for though many of their pieces are scarce worthy a mountebank's stage, there are yet others that would do honour to any pen whatever; and it is no more a reproach to the Italians, that the French produce such as the former, for specimens of their taste; than it would be to us, were they to have a *Comedie Angloise*, and exhibit our late popular pieces of pageantry, when they might have chosen from a Congreve, a Johnson, or a Shakespeare.

The opera is the most superb spectacle of Paris, and, in its decorations, scenery, and dancing, perhaps stands unrivalled. The house is very spacious, and in general well filled: though I imagine that the orchestra, which can boast an excellent band, has the least share in drawing the glittering crowds that resort there. But I judge from myself.— However no disparagement to this opera, I believe the same may be said of all the

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concerts in the world—few are those that feel the power of music, and I believe if we were to cull such, from the number whom fashion, idleness, intrigue, or curiosity has drawn; we should not find the proportion above one to an hundred. You may suppose me, if you please, to be with the majority: for, I assure you, I can find little inducement, either in the singing or dancing, to frequent the opera of Paris. Do not think I went prejudiced from report, for I am far from having a poor opinion of the French music in general, and from condemning their composition or execution, excepting that part which is performed by the voice. I should no more think of decrying the compositions of *Lully*, *Phillidor*, *Gretry*, and many others, than I should of abusing the productions of *Burney*, *Sacchini*, or *Handel*. The music would please me exceedingly, could I hear it without the vile squalling with which it is accompanied. The performers on different instruments yield

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to none, but of their singers I have not heard one that has the least taste or judgment in the management of the voice; and I have wondered how it has been possible for them, to be so disagreeable to the ear, in airs that would have done honour to any composer whatever. I have heard the *Orfeo* of the Chevalier Gluck so mangled, that had it not been for the symphonies, no one, however well acquainted with it before, could have known or recollect it. Whether the English or French, is the best calculated to accompany musical sounds, let those decide, who are better judges than I am: I do not mean to compare the one with the other: for as habit reconciles us to every thing, this opera in an English dress, might possibly be as disagreeable to the French, as it is in its Parisian garb to me. Voltaire says, that French music is only proper for French ears, and cannot be relished by any other, for this reason—*parce que la profonde françoise est différente de toutes celles*

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celles de l'Europe. Nous appuions (says he) toujours sur la dernière syllabe & toutes les autres nations pesent sur la penultième, ou sur l'antepenultième, ainsi que les Italiens. Nous n'avons point l'habitude, qu'on a chez le pape, & dans les autres cours Italiennes, de priver les hommes de leur virilité, pour leur donner une voix plus belle que celle des femmes. Tout cela joint à la lenteur de notre chant, qui fait un étrange contraste avec la vivacité de notre nation, rendra toujours la musique françoise propre pour les seuls françois. This may probably be true, for whatever was the cause, there was not a singer that I thought had either judgment or sweetness of voice ; and yet some of them were heard with as great an attention, and gained as warm plaudits, as ever did a Linley or a Davis.

I have been much pleased with the Concert Spirituel, as I had an opportunity of hearing there, the most celebrated performers of France display their execution and taste, in solos and concertos composed

composed for their particular instruments. This spectacle answers to our oratorios, and is performed on days, when the theatres are not open. There, as well as at the opera, every air accompanied with French words was detestable : and tho' pleasing in the symphonies, when the singer began, were no longer so : but it seemed as if a squaling pipe of an organ had accidentally burst its valve, and destroyed the effect, that an elegant composition would otherwise have had.

Among the public spectacles, I must not forget to tell you of one, that I little expected to have seen in France : I mean bull-baiting, and that more inhuman than even an English butcher can well conceive. The place appointed for this polite diversion, is a small amphitheatre built of wood. Around the arena, in the antient manner, are the caves and dens for the beasts of combat ; and over these are the boxes and galleries for the spectators.

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tors. As this spectacle was announced by printed papers, Mr. —— and I had the curiosity to see how it was conducted : as the French bestow very liberally on the English, the title of a cruel nation, on account of the fondness the common people discover, for this, and some other diversions of the same sort. It begun with various combats of wolves, bears, and wild boars, with mastiffs : but the bull was reserved as a finishing stroke to satiate the cruelty of the spectators. It was not long before ours was sufficiently glutted. The animal, in springing to the first dog that entered, broke off his horn, close to his head, against the wall. He was then defenceless : but they continued to send in mastiffs to the number of fourteen, that were suffered to hang about him, till he fell to the ground. This we did not see, for we could not stay the conclusion ; but as we heard from our servant whom we left there, he was devouring alive for more than two hours, and that

his

his nose, tongue, eyes, and throat were eaten, before he expired. Join with me, here, in retorting back on the French, the appellation, they bestow on us, of *Peuple barbare.*

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER X.

Paris, June 1st, 1775.

THE encouragement that is given to arts and sciences, the number of academies, pensions, and honours designed to crown superior merit ; must certainly give the French a title, to rank high in the estimation of the world. We can little expect genius to make such rapid strides with us, as it did in the age of Lewis the Fourteenth, till it is protected, and fostered in the same manner, by royal favour. With us that sun has never yet shone but through a cloud. We have seen in the course of a number of years, one or two of our literary characters lifted above poverty : an artist or two complimented with an honorary distinction : and an academy lately

lately established for painting and sculpture. The turbulence, indeed, of the English nation, seldom leaves the minds of its monarchs vacant enough, to think about the progress of the arts and sciences : for less harrassed by the bitterness of malevolence, and the misfortunes of his family, the present might have left us nothing to wish for, in his character. But now the fund of our honours, employments, and pensions, is exhausted in reimbursing members of parliament the expences of their several elections, and oiling the wheels of administration, which we know not how to keep free from rust.

Do not think that I am going to give you an account of the academies that are in Paris, I assure you I mean no such thing : that, you must get from some one, who has more knowledge of the matter than I have : I can only tell you that there are such institutions : though I do not believe I could even enumerate all

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all their names. The most famous, as I have heard, are the *Academie Françoise*, the *Academy of Sciences*, and the *Academy of Inscriptions*, and the *Belles Lettres*. The design of the *French Academy*, is to correct and improve the French language. The number of its members is forty: many of whom are noblemen of the first rank and character. These are said to have abused the intent of the original institution, by introducing a corruption into that tongue, whose taste and purity they ought to have preserved. The *Esprit Academique* is grown into a proverb: and signifies a manner of decorating the most trivial and common ideas, with pompous phrase, and laboured elegance of diction. Perhaps you will be better pleased, if I transcribe what *Montesquieu* says of this academy, than with any account I can possibly give you of it.

*J'ai oui parler d'une espece de tribunal,
qu'on appelle L'academie Françoise. Il
n'y*

n'y en a point, de moins respecté dans le monde, car on dit qu'aussitot qu'il a decidé, le peuple casse ses arrets & lui impose des loix, qu'il est obligé de suivre.

Il y a quelque temps que, pour fixer son autorité, il donna un code de ses jugemens. Cet enfant de tant de peres, étoit presque vieux, quand il naquit ; et quoiqu'il fut légitime, un* batard, qui avoit déjà paru, l'avoit presque étouffé dans sa naissance.

Ceux qui la composent, n'ont d'autres fonctions, que de jaser sans cesse, l'éloge va se placer, comme de lui même, dans leur habileté éternelle, & s'oil qu'ils soyez initiés dans ses mystères, la fureur du panégyrique vient les saisir, & ne les quitte plus.

Ce corps a quarante têtes, toutes remplies de figures, de métaphores, & d'antithèses : tant de bouches ne parlent presque que par exclamations, ses oreilles veulent être frappées toujours par la cadence & l'harmonie.

* The Dictionary of Furetiere.

Pour

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Pour les yeux il n'en est pas question : il semble qu'il soit fait pour parler, & non pas pour voir. Il n'est point ferme sur ses pieds, car le temps, qui est son fleau, l'ebranle a tous les instans, & detruit tout ce qu'il a fait. On dit autrement, que ses mains étoient avides je ne t'en dirai rien, & je laisse deci-cider cela a ceux qui la scavent mieux que moi.

The *Academy of Sciences* is composed of geometers, astronomers, mechanics, botanists, chemists and a certain number of honorary members. Some foreigners are also admitted. The *Academy of Inscriptions* consists chiefly of antiquarians ; whose most important business is, to compose a history of France in a series of medals.

As having been the author of any work against the established religion, or government, is an exclusion from these academies, they have not escaped rhe censures,

censures, and wit of those, who have disqualified themselves for being members. A gentleman, to whom I stand indebted for much politeness and information, gave me an epitaph that my serve, among many, as an example of this. It is *Piron's*, the author of the *Gustave* and the *Metromanie*: and as you may not have seen it, though common, I shall not much fatigue myself if I write it here, nor you if you read it.

*Cy git Piron, qui ne fut rien,
Pas meme Academicien.*

Indeed, according to the strictness of the rules of the academies, I believe there is not a French writer of the present age, of any eminence, who has not forfeited all the title he might have, of entering into such associations, though his interest or character may probably have procured him a reception.

I suppose

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I suppose academies, like other human institutions, seldom answer, in every particular, the design on which they were founded. In general I believe they do: for though there seems to be a decline of their estimation in Paris, it may be more owing to the ludicrous light in which the excluded wits have held them up, than to any deviations with which they may be changed. *Voltaire* says, that there is a certain fatality in academies, as no work that has ever born the title of *academique*, was ever found to be a work of genius. This may, perhaps, be true in France; however it is no argument against the utility of academies in general, and only shews that the best things have their inconveniences and abuses. If the French who have passed their course of studies, never choose to quit the walls of that school wherein they have been educated, nor have ever been bold enough to walk without the precincts of imitation: it does not follow

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low that it is impossible they ever should; or that the trammels of imitation and just principles are not necessary, to fledge and strengthen the wings of the most vigorous and active genius.

Ahead of a few dotted lines overleaf,
LETTER

LETTER XI.

Paris, June 5th, 1775.

— — — ,

I THANK you for your polite letter ; and the kind concern you take in my health. Do not fancy that my body has suffered, by the change from substantial plain dishes, to the sophisticated viands of French cookery : that it is considerably reduced, I am very certain, if my clothes have not expanded, by removing three or four degrees to the south : but I cannot attribute it to any other cause, than the detestable water of the Seine.

Much have the French truly to boast of this river, when its waters are so poisonous, that scarce any foreigner can drink them, without being fluxed off his

his legs. If it has any merit, it is, that it increases the revenue of the *droit d'aubaine** ; as I am convinced many must yearly fall victims to their ignorance of its effects. My friend Mr. —, has not fared much better than I have, and I believe for the future would as soon, if it were possible, drink the streams of Cocytus or Avernus, as a glass from this truly diabolical river.

But there is another advantage, the king of France derives from the waters of the Seine being poisonous : which is, that those who are aware of the danger, and cannot drink wine alone, as we now do, must have recourse to his reservoirs, where that, which is said to be purified, is sold at a certain price per quart. However I shall not venture to make free with this *eau du roi* ; as I am afraid

* *The droit d'aubaine, is a law, whereby the king of France seizes all the effects of any foreigner, that happens to die in his kingdom.*

it may retain many abominable qualities, after all its precolations.

Do not ask me what I think of the common people here ; I can give you but a very indifferent character of them, having been so unfortunate as to meet with none but rogues and cheats. Perhaps I am not qualified to judge, and they may have virtues of which I am ignorant ; I am willing to hope so : but most Englishmen, I believe, that visit Paris, are strangers to them as well as myself ; at least I never met with any that was not. I have said that fear makes them polite, and that you do not find among them, such as the populace in London, who will insult, steal, and commit outrages in the streets : but in extactions, and all the low arts of imposition, no native of China can go beyond them. Never yet have I seen one *marchand* or tradesman, who did not ask double or treble what he ought to, or would take. These men seem to look on Englishmen

as

as lawful prey; for the moment they find the buyer of their goods is one, they put in practice every art, to fleece him of his money; and I believe, in general, do not find a great deal of dexterity necessary. Was I to visit Paris again, I would endeavour to find out those places, if possible, where my countrymen have never been; for wherever they have touched, you will surely be obliged to suffer a thousand tricks of knavery and imposition. In short, a Dupe and an Englishman are synonymous terms all over Paris.

The moment you enter your hotel, there is a combination against you. Your tradesmen pay a tax to the master, for a permission to sell within his walls, and under him, to your servant, for his recommendation; so that together with an exorbitant profit for themselves, you may judge what you are likely to pay for every thing you want. The *Traiteur* bargains with your servant, that he will
fend

send him a dinner or supper whenever he wants to entertain his friends, or for himself, if you are not to maintain him, provided he can persuade you to give such a price : and your vintner, that he will supply him with wine, if he promises to keep it a secret, that you pay three times as much as a Frenchman. There are a thousand other things of this kind, which I have no inclination at present to enumerate.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Paris June 15th, 1775.

— — — ,

THE genius of the French nation seems to have been upon the decline, ever since the age of Lewis the Fourteenth; for out of the multitude of writers, and artists of the present age, few are those that can be placed in the scale, against the famous group, that enlightened that remarkable æra. It seems to be the fate of nations, to rise suddenly from barbarism to excellence, to exhaust their superior powers in the few first efforts, and blaze forth at once with their full vigour; leaving nothing for succeeding ages, but a power of raking up the embers and refuse of their materials, and of varying what they have already arranged. *Voltaire* says,

he has found out the reason, which has been searched for in vain, why national genius bears all its blossoms in its first fecundity, and afterwards relapses, almost suddenly, to its pristine sterility.

It is (says he) que chez les peuples qui cultivent les beaux arts, il faut beaucoup d'années pour épurer la langue, & le goût; quand ces premiers pas sont faits, alors les génies se développent; l'emulation, la faveur public prodiguée à ces nouveaux efforts, excitent tous les talents; chaque artiste fait en son genre les beautés naturelles que le genre comporte: quiconque approfondit la théorie des arts purement de génie, doit, s'il a quelque génie lui même, savoir, que ces premières beautés, ces grands traits naturels qui appartiennent à ces arts, & qui conviennent à la nation pour laquelle on travaille, sont en petit nombre; & les sujets, & les embellissements ont de bornes bien plus resserrées qu'on ne pense.

Voltaire himself is the only one we can set against Corneille, Racine, Moliere, Crebillon,

billon, Destouches, &c. to whom, notwithstanding all his attempts to depreciate their merit, in order to set himself up as the standard of perfection, he must be allowed to be not a little inferior. Tho' the present is said to be the age of metaphysics, I should as soon think of exalting our modern sophists above Mr. Locke, as I should in comparing the age of Malbranche, with that of Diderot.

Cardinal *De Bernis* speaks of the depravation of the French taste and literature, in the following verses :

*Il est encore des talens dans la France
Qui des nœufs sœurs nourissent l'esperance
Mais je croirois qu'au frivole inclinés
De la nature ils sont detournés
Se pourroit ils Francois, que notre verve
Eut reveillé le courroux de Minerve
Qu'on eut fondu l'or du siecle passé
Pour y mettre un clinquant effacé.*

*Le naturel s'est usé sous la lime
La symmetrie a banni le sublime :
Et la clarté, ce flambeau du discours,
Pali, s'eteint, & fait place aux faux jours.*

The state of the arts also, seem to bear no proportion to that of the last century ; for, tho' they can boast such names as a *Falconet*, a *Pigale*, or *La Tour*, it will be difficult, even for these, to stand against numbers, and so formidable a body as *Poussin*, *Le Sueur*, *Le Brun*, *Puget*, *Girardon*, and many others. As for the mechanic arts, it seems as if they had taken flight with the Protestants, and made England the place of their habitation : it being beyond credibility, how far our mechanicks leave those of France behind them.

A nation I think may be pronounced to be on the decline, when its literary refinements are pushed to extravagance, folly, and profligacy : when its writers openly declaim in favour of vice, and set up new systems in contradiction to common-sense ; when they ridicule religion, and attempt to destroy every principle by which the wisdom of the world, ever since its creation, has supposed

posed the mind, and actions of man ought to be governed. This is the case at present with France; for a kind of madness, of combating received opinions, seems to have seized the whole race of scribblers here; which, I am convinced, an affectation of novelty, and a ridiculous vanity, has a greater share in propagating, than a conviction of their tenets being right, or the interests and happiness of individuals, or society. They tell you, *qu'on doit conserver les préjugés de la coutume, pour agir comme un autre homme ; mais, on doit se défaire de préjugés, pour penser en homme sage.* This maxim is carried to such a pitch of extravagance, that all received truths seem to be confounded in the proscription of prejudices: and to be attacked on all sides, by the ridicule and sophistry of those, who have the presumption to set up their reason in opposition to the wisdom of ages, or think they have wit and argument enough to poison the minds of thousands, and persuade them to

what they do not, in reality, believe themselves. The very chief of the literary characters here, is a man who ought to be banished society ; a man who, instead of labouring to render mankind more virtuous and happy, prostitutes his great abilities to the vilest purposes, in endeavouring to make them more corrupt and miserable. In those laudable attempts, the inferior race of authors are not slow to follow him ; a race who would pluck from conscience and *curbed licence* the muzzle of restraint, exterminate all distinction of right and wrong, sap the foundations of virtue, and destroy the hopes of mankind in the immortality of the soul, and debase the human species below the brute creation, overthrow all laws, all revelation, and impudently blacken religion, with impious calumnies and blasphemous representations. Many of these kinds of productions have found their way into England ; and some worthy gentlemen, to diffuse their influence more wide, have
bestowed

bestowed pains in translating, what ought to have been burnt, as soon as published, by the hands of the common hangman.

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LETTER XIII.

Lyons, June 22d, 1775.

— — — ,

LOOK at the superscription, and you will see, that I have made a pretty long skip since I wrote my last letter—One hundred leagues at least, is the distance of Paris, from this famous city *Lyons*—You will hear but little of me, if I make such, in every interval of our correspondence. However you must not think that I have been idle, or have forgotten I was in your debt; but rather impute my omissions to want of time, and opportunity, to which they are in fact owing: for, from two o'clock in the morning, to five in the afternoon, we have been cooped up in the *Diligence*, where, if the motion would have permitted, the incessant clatter of tongues around

around would have made writing impossible. Perhaps you wonder to hear me mention a diligence, when you know we took over an English chaise, with a view to be trundled at our convenience and pleasure. But that scheme was given up for a new one ; and as yet repentence has not overtaken us : for, 'tis not an hour ago, that we congratulated each other on the change ; and are at present persuaded, that we shall reap all the superior advantages, which it seemed to promise, when first started.

To travel post, is certainly the most eligible method, for a man who consults his ease, more than his improvement ; and has no other design than of being whisked over a great deal of ground, that he may be able to say he has been at such and such places ; and of passing for my *Lor Anglois* at the Auberges. On considering this common method of travelling, we thought that unless we had our portmanteaus stuffed with recom-

E 5 mendatory

mendatory letters, for every town and village, we must lose a deal of information, which we should wish to gain, or, at the best, be content with that, which an ignorant postilion, or the masters and servants of the inns, might condescend to give. On the other hand, we imagined, that, by mixing with a number of the French, in the boats and coaches, we should be more than commonly unfortunate, if we did not meet with some, who would be both willing and able to instruct us, in most things we wanted to know: as it was more than probable, the greater number of our fellow-travellers might belong to the provinces thro' which we were to pass, or to which we were going. From Paris to this city there was no place which we could not see in the time of the *relais*; and on the other parts of our rout, we resolved to take places from town to town, according to our pleasure, or that method of travelling, which the different provinces afforded. The natural propensity all

people

people have to take as little trouble as possible, was continually dissuading us, and dropping hints, that we might suffer some mortifications, and many disagreeable necessities: but it was not for two young men, of six-and-twenty, to be frightened at a few rubs: at least we were ashamed to own it, if we were. Our chaise and servants, we therefore discarded, as things for which we had no farther occasion; and it was agreed *nem. con.* to sally forth in a new manner, and be directed by those circumstances which chance should throw in our way.

I left Paris with regret, as I had begun to form an acquaintance with those, who would have left me nothing to wish for in entertainment, or instruction. But we had already exceeded the time we purposed to stay there; and our fare having been paid for three hundred miles, œconomy forbade a longer protraction.

One, who was apt to draw presages of schemes from their beginnings, would not have hesitated to pronounce, that we should be heartily tired in the prosecution of ours. The miserable hovel, into which we were thrust the first night, gave no great room for any hope of comfortable entertainment, at the other inns on the road. Dirt and filth appeared, in all the animate and inanimate things, that appertained to it : but 'twas to no purpose to be uneasy about the matter, for no other room, less abominable than that we were shown into, was to be got ; so that we were obliged to sit down with the philosopher's consolation, that *levius fit patientia*, &c. You would have laughed to have seen us sitting in silent dudgeon opposite each other, hesitating what to do, whether to sit up, or run the risk of being devoured alive. The beds seemed to promise a comfortable number of inhabitants, and I assure you we were not deceived in our expectations : for we had scarce

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scarce ventured between the sheets, before we were surrounded, in both beds, by such a quantity of bugs, as seemed to blacken the pillows. Great news, you'll say, truly, to write from France, that we have been pestered with bugs! But you, who can enjoy the luxury of neat apartments and wholesome beds, must allow strollers to talk of those things, which are to them of greater *pith and moment*, than antiquities, towns, or provinces. I know not, whether this circumstance has not left stronger traces on our memory, than any town or village through which we passed. And what will you have me relate, but that which strikes it most? We were obliged to leap out of bed, and not any sleep could we get till we heard a summons at the door, to bid us rise. But I have done; may never one of those detestable vermin profane your face, as they have that of

Your &c.

daily

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Lyons, June 23d, 1775.

THE coach we found had its full complement: for no less than ten were crammed into its enormous carcase. I fancy I hear you say—ten in one coach! Yes—and ten is but a trifling number, compared with that, which some of the diligences about Paris carry. The interior of this machine is about seven feet by five: and the passengers sit around the sides, fronting each other. When I found myself cased in it with so many, I confess I had some apprehensions; that we should, on the first jolt, all break to the ground. But I had not observed its exterior strength; which

which I thought afterwards, when I examined the massy wheels, axle, &c. was calculated to transport, upon occasion, a tower from one town to another.

We soon perceived that we had fallen into agreeable company, and had some prospect of spending our time comfortably in the coach, whatever we might in the *Auberges*. Many a time have I travelled in diligences; but never yet was witness to a conversation in one, so quickly circulated. Every tongue, though it was dark, was busy, the moment the horses were put in motion: and the difference between a coachful of Frenchmen and a coachful of Englishmen, could not but strike me very forcibly. In the one, a profound silence reigns throughout; or the first that breaks it is he that is soonest asleep. Every one surlily takes the place to which he thinks he has a right: for the offer of a seat, which is looked upon to
be

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be the best, is a strain their politeness seldom reaches. Then, not a soul dares to speak till the morning dawns, except some honest doser, who having been at loggerheads with his neighbour, rouses up to ask pardon. When the light permits, every one examines the company with circumspection ; and bold is the man, who ventures to draw his watch, and declare the hour to the rest. One would imagine, in this respect, that England, instead of France, was the arbitrary government, and that people were afraid of opening their mouths in the dark, lest there should be some spy, who might misinterpret their words into disaffection. In the other, the behaviour is directly the reverse ; and the conversation seems like a repast, to which a number of hungry men are introduced, who, not doubting their welcome, fall to eating their fill, without invitation or ceremony.

Until

Until the day broke upon us, we were entertained by a person, whom we found afterwards to be a Knight of Malta, with an account of the coronation, at which he had been present. He was plied with questions on all sides, by persons whose phizzes he could not discover; and directed his answers to the quarter from whence the voices came. Before the company could well view each others faces, we were acquainted with the profession, and busines of half our fellow-travellers. As soon as we were discovered to be Englishmen, had we had a hundred tongues, inquisitiveness would have found employment for them all. We parried their questions as well as we could, and entitled ourselves to push again in our turn: in short, we were as well acquainted with each other, before breakfast, as if we had been cooped up together for a month.

The

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The shining characters of our company were, a surgeon, a Dieppe and a Paris mercer, the officer of Malta, and a lady of about seven or eight-and-twenty, whose pleasure was a law to all. The surgeon, to whom we were indebted for the principal part of our mirthful entertainment, gave us, between his stories, an account of extraordinary cases that had come within the sphere of his practice, and of a cradle which he had invented for a fractured leg, and for which he had received the prize of a silver medal. Your friend — and I often stared upon one another, as his anatomical lectures were such, as we did not imagine well calculated for the ears of the young lady, who was one of the audience, and equally a stranger to every one in the coach, as to us. But we were much more surprized to hear her join in the conversation, on the dissection of a reputed hermaphrodite, with as much ease and

and freedom, as if it had been on fashions. But it is not the first mistake I have made in judging what female delicacy is capable of bearing here. However, notwithstanding all his indelicate dissections, our surgeon was the superior wit of all, and I feel a concern whilst I am writing, to think I may never again see a man, who was able to diffuse so much good humour, and cheerfulness around him.

After dinner, as if the Burgundy had made their *bosom's lord fit lightly on his throne*, they drowned the noise of the wheels in singing. We found they were very desirous of hearing an English song; and as you know we are both thrummers on the harpsichord, we sung a duet of Handel's: with which their national politeness would not suffer them, to express themselves any otherwise than pleased. But I am afraid, if I go on in this manner, to tell you every thing we did
and

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and said in the diligence, you will be tired, though we were not, before you get to Lyons.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

Lyons, June 22d, 1775.

— — ,

OUR rate of travelling was no more than sixty miles a day, though we got up at two or three o'clock in the morning: but the tediousness was amply overbalanced, by the mirth and good-humour of the company. Before we approached any town, or village, we had full information of every thing there worthy of curiosity: and by means of the *relais*, and the good nature of our fellow-travellers, had generally leisure, and conductors enough in our rambles. Our number after the first day increased considerably, for several had taken possession of the outside of the coach, among whom was the young abbé, and an officer. These two sometimes exchanged places

places with those on the inside; and seemed to relieve those, whose tongue had already done sufficient duty.

I shall not easily forget the cheerful countenances of the diligence: though good-humour was by no means wanting, when we were shut up together; yet at dinner and supper, as though cramped before, it expanded itself, and spread on every face additional risibility. Some mendicant monks generally attended the desert with a plate, to collect alms for their convent; and I could not but wonder, at the little success they met with, from people, whose behaviour seemed to promise universal benevolence. Their petitions were commonly answered with a wave of the head; and seldom did I see any one prevailed on, to drop a sou for charity. Once, indeed, when a young jolly monk entered, whose face shewed little penance or mortification, the young lady of our company, to whom he applied, promised
to

to make a collection for him, if he would salute her. The Franciscan pressed his hand to his breast, shook his head, and by his looks seemed to tell her he dared not. The whole circle of our company then displayed a large contribution, which they promised to give, if he would comply with the conditions: but either his monastic vow, or the discipline of his convent had too great weight with him, to be overbalanced by the temptation. I felt some kind of indignation at seeing him an object of ridicule, which he had not deserved. However, he did not appear to be sensible of any indignity offered him, but took it as a *bardinage*, to which he had been accustomed. The *fille*, who waited on us, joining in the laugh, was offered the collection, if she would kiss him: but he retired with precipitation.

I know not what induced our fair fellow-traveller, to be so severe on those ecclesiasticks, that happened to fall in
her

her company : but she seldom missed an opportunity, of attempting to turn them into ridicule. Perhaps it might be that the monastic orders seem to defy, and declare war against her sex : for she treated every *religieux* as an enemy, and his continence and sanctity as grimace. The quarter, nuns might expect to meet from men, would, I believe, be but little better ; and they would not often escape, were they permitted to walk without their convents, the jeers of those, who consider them as less man-haters in reality, than in profession. The young abbé, I mentioned, was a little unfortunate, in paying his devoirs to one, who showed no mercy to the fraternity. *Mademoiselle* had employed some time, to make him believe, that she was struck with his figure, and had conceived a *tendresse* for him. He swallowed the bait, and made serious proposals to her, of quitting his habit, and decamping *en poste* : but the flinty-hearted damsel published his offers, to his great mortification,

mortification, and the diversion of the company.

The face of Burgundy afforded but little variety, as it is almost entirely covered with vines. It was reasonable to expect, at every *auberge*, in this province, to find the best of that wine, which bears its name: but we found, that the prime of the vintage was generally sent to merchants, or barrelled for exportation, and that nothing was reserved but the meagre pressings of the promiscuous ripe and unripe fruit. It might be our chance, to have only the commonest wine brought to table, as the coachman supplied it; but our enquiries were unsuccessful if there was any other at the inns.

LETTER XVI.

Lyons, June 23d, 1775.

AT Chalons we quitted our honest coachman, and embarked on board the *diligence d'eau* of the Soane. I did not like the looks of our water, as those of our land-conductor; for Charon himself would have been out-surlied by such a visage: however the change of scene could not but be pleasing. The last morning's journey was not quite so agreeable as the former ones, on account of the heat. Not a cloud was to be seen; and the sun, with the exercise of dragging such an unwieldy machine as the coach, proved too powerful for one of the horses, tho' they were the best I had

I had seen in France. The beast dropped panting, and struggling for life, and all endeavours to raise him were ineffectual. Our driver, who I think would have yielded to few men for size, stood looking on him for some time in silence; and then, as if he had thought of a remedy, took out a bottle of wine, that he kept for his own refreshment, and threw what he could down his horse's throat: the rest he poured into the ears, and shook them, as though he would willingly invigorate the head as well as the body. We would fain have persuaded him to cut a vein, but he had little opinion of our skill in farriery, and rather chose to leave the recovery to nature and the wine: so with the assistance of the postilion, he dragged the dying animal to the side of the road, and drove on with the remaining nine. But notwithstanding his contempt of our advice, and leaving his horse in that forlorn condition, it was agreed by all that he was a *bon enfant*.

The *Diligence d'eau* is a large boat, fitted up for the reception of passengers, with two chambers, one where the travellers to and from Paris, with those above the common rank are assembled, the other for the servants and peasants. It is drawn by horses, and travels expeditiously with the stream, but I imagine rather tediously against it. Those who choose to see the country, may seat themselves on the top; and with a *parasol* or umbrella will find it very agreeable, as there is not the least danger of falling over-board, the whole being encompassed with rails. We were here very fortunate, in the addition that was made to our company, which was now increased to twenty-five, or thirty. In this large circle we found a more respectable character than we had hitherto met with, in a Canon of Lyons, who was one of the passengers. As he was a man of learning and politeness, his conversation added not a little both to our entertainment and instruction. I must not forget to

to mention that we had also two ladies, both young and handsome, whose agreeable manners contributed, perhaps as much as the Canon's wit and erudition, to beguile the time of our journey : nay, I assure you, I even wished it lengthened, as I knew we must part at Lyons.

The country between Chalons and this city seems fertile : the hills are skirted with some trees, and the vineyards are extended along the declivities down to the banks of the *Soane*. Some of the pleasure-boats, which we met in great numbers on this river, were rowed in a manner different from any I had ever seen before, and seemed to cut the water with great swiftness. But I should not say rowed, for there were no oars belonging to them. What served in their stead, were two small wheels, made in the same form as those of common water-mills, whose radii were little longer than the distance from the edge or gunwale of the boat, to the surface of

the water. These may be either raised, or depressed at pleasure, as the boat is more or less laden ; that the fans, which act on the water, may be immersed their proper depth. The person who works them, sits between their two handles, which are on the inside, and seems to be less laboriously employed than if he was tugging at the oar. Perhaps you may have seen this method used in England, but as I never did, you will excuse me for mentioning it.

It is impossible to give you an adequate description of the beautiful prospect *Lyons* presents, at its entrance by the Soane. The picture is both romantic and charming. The villas and houses on the banks as you approach have an inexpressible air of gaiety, and are built in a manner that cannot fail of catching the eye. But this pleasure is prodigiously increased, when the city itself appears. Some of its buildings are raised on the projection of the rocks, on the sides of the

the river : others on the declivities of hills, resting on arches, surrounded with pendant gardens, supported in the same manner ; and on the mountains, which rise one above another, to bound the prospect, are scattered several towers, obelisks, or castles.

The diligence was no sooner perceived, than a shoal of boats put off from the shore, contending which should reach us first. These boats, which were all rowed by women, instead of men, surrounded us presently. The nimble Amazons clambered up on all sides, and were very importunate to engage what number of the passengers they could, to enter their little skiffs, in order to convey them to the different parts of the town where they were going, as our water-coach proceeded no further. It seems to be a strange perversion of occupation, that the husbands here should be employed in throwing silk, whilst the wife and daughters are labouring at the

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oar, and tanning themselves in the sun. In these boats two girls were the rowers, whilst an old woman acted as coxswain.

Tho' we were very well pleased with each other's company, yet our minds were too much occupied with joy at our arrival, and expectation of what we were to see, to feel any great regret at parting with our fellow-travellers : here our mirth and pleasure ended, we took a hasty leave of each other, and dispersed ourselves, some in one boat and some in another, to different parts of the city.

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THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.